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GERMANY'S HOPE FOR PEACE

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Conversations with
Chancellor Marx of Germany

By EDWARD PRICE BELL

THE CHICAGO DAILY NEWS
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Bell

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OF

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TALKS WITH THE GERMAN CHANCELLOR.

What is the condition to-day of the German republic and the German people?

To obtain a reliable answer to this question The Daily News commissioned Edward Price Bell, long a member of its staff of correspondents, to visit Berlin and hold a series of conversations with the German chancellor, Dr. Wilhelm Marx, an able and sincere statesman, whose administration of the affairs of the sorely tried nation has been markedly beneficial.

Many Informing Conversations.

Mr. Bell, writing to The Daily News, thus describes his conversations with the chancellor:

"Our talks took place in the library of the chancellery at a round table beneath the coat of arms of Bismarck

was Dr. Otto Carl Kiep, legal counselor of the chancellery, a master of English as of German. For a full fortnight we availed ourselves of scraps of time, early and late, between cabinet meetings, administrative duties and the demands of the electoral campaign, then at its height. Of talking alone there was twenty-four solid hours, and then days and nights of writing, translating, re-translating, revising and revising again. Judge Marx made his final study of my finished draft as he traveled between Berlin and Frankfurt in the course of a speaking tour.

Appearance of the Chancellor.

"Dignity, simplicity, modesty, spiritual-mindedness, instinctive grasp of essentials, broad human sympathy and individual warmth of nature are conspicuous qualities of Judge Marx's personality. His eyes are gray, his face round and benevolent, his forehead wide and high. He has a white mustache and his hair is cut short all over. He speaks rapidly in a low voice, making occasional simple gestures with his hands, and often smiling searchingly into the eyes of those about him. His kindliness, his courtesy, cannot be exaggerated; these, so far as I could observe, never were thrust aside by duty, however urgent and onerous. His gold-rimmed spectacles add to his professional benignity.

"From the room where we talked we looked out upon the wooded gardens of the chancellery—a paradise in summer, already flooded with the melody of the thrush. Flanking these gardens was the colonnade, specially constructed for the strolls and the state-causeries of Bismarck and the old emperor. Near at hand were the chancellor's office, with its great desk and lofty ceilings; Bismarck's room, with his own roll-top mahogany desk, a bookcase atop, and on the walls portraits of the old emperor, Von Bulow and the iron chancellor himself, a vivid, grim, and powerful figure; the congress hall, where the representa-



CHANCELLOR WILHELM MARX.

and with souvenirs of the iron chancellor on every hand. Our interpreter

REPORT APPROVED BY CHANCELLOR.

Der Reichskanzler.

Berlin, den 8. April 1924.

Rk. 2446.

An

Herrn E. Price Bell

The Chicago Daily News

z. Zt. Berlin

Hotel Adlon.

Sehr geehrter Herr Price Bell !

Die von Ihnen vorgelegte Aufzeichnung gibt den Inhalt unserer Gespräche über die gegenwärtigen wirtschaftlichen und politischen Probleme Deutschlands richtig wieder. Ich bestätige Ihnen gern, dass unsere Unterhaltungen sich in jeder Hinsicht auf dem Boden gegenseitigen vollsten Vertrauens abspielten und dass die behandelten Fragen in aller Offenheit erörtert worden sind.

Es war mir ein Vergnügen, durch diese Unterhaltungen zu dem wertvollen Werke beizutragen, welches die Chicago Daily News der internationalen Aufklärung im Sinne der Völkerverständigung gewidmet hat.

In ausgezeichnete Hochachtung

Marx

Following is a translation of the letter by Chancellor Marx to Mr. Bell, approving the report of the conversations between them:

The Chancellor.

Rk. 2446.

To

Mr. E. Price Bell

The Chicago Daily News

Berlin,

Berlin, April 8, 1924.

Hotel Adlon.

My dear Mr. Price Bell:—

The notes kindly submitted by you give a correct rendering of the contents of our discussions on the economic and political problems of present-day Germany. I have pleasure in confirming to you that our conversations were thoroughly frank and based on the spirit of the fullest mutual confidence.

It has been very gratifying to me to be able through these discussions to offer a contribution to the valuable endeavor which The Chicago Daily News is devoting to international understanding and the reconciliation of the world.

Yours very sincerely,

MARX.

tives of the great powers, including Disraeli, met to settle the eastern question; the cabinet room, where there are so many meetings now; the gilded and artistic salon, with winter garden, scene of magnificent social gatherings in the past; next door the foreign office—the whole in the center of the most historic associations of the Wilhelmstrasse, the most famous and aristocratic street of the greatest modern city of Europe.”

He Has Given Notable Service.

Wilhelm Marx, aged 61, was born at Cologne, where he attended the gymnasium. He studied law at Bonn university and entered the legal service of the state in 1884, and he has held many judgeships, including that of the presidency of the Court of Appeal in Berlin. He is president of the Catholic schools organization of Germany, and of the People's Catholic union. For nineteen years he has been a member of the Prussian diet. For eight years he was member of the old German reichstag. He was a member of the German national assembly and then a member of the new reichstag. He is the author of numerous works on legal and educational questions. Judge Marx became the German chancellor Nov. 30, 1923, in succession to Gustav Stresemann, now minister of foreign affairs.

BANKRUPT GERMANY'S LONGING FOR PEACE.

Berlin, Germany, April 8.—The following is a report of conversations held by me with the German chancellor, Wilhelm Marx, at the chancellery, Berlin, March and April, 1924:

“What are republican Germany's chief anxieties and problems?”

“All center in the reparations question. Speaking quite nonrhetorically, this question is pregnant with life or death for Germany. If we be freed politically and economically; if our definitive burden be one we can bear; and, if we receive the foreign financial countenance essential to our solvency, we can erect a stable democratic state, and bring back to our people the prosperity vital alike to them and to those producing and distributing nations that stand in a relation of interdependence to them. Denied the advantages I have enumerated we can look forward to nothing but the disruption of our state and the prostration of our economy, with the measureless misery they imply.”

“Do you regard as synonymous the safety of the republic and the safety of European peace?”

“I regard the republic as a powerful influence for neighborliness, reason, and justice in Europe—that is to say, a powerful influence for peace here and everywhere. If the republic went

down before a nationalistic movement, produced and fostered by unrelenting pressure from abroad, such radical developments, whether in the direction of the extreme right or the extreme left, obviously, would be fatal to any sort of fulfillment of the treaty of Versailles. We have met and subdued indescribable difficulties. Our efforts—efforts to cope with the concrete and the unavoidable—have provided, I think, an incomparable field for the study of history, political economy, finance, and every major problem of organized human life, beset with the most grievous conditions that can afflict a people. Radical dangers, from the extreme right and the extreme left, have been put down. Republicanism is rooted in the convictions of the people. It can be uprooted only by storms that may break over it from abroad.”

Loyalty of the German Army.

“Your army is loyal?”

“In every crisis before the war, during the war, and since the war, our army has been loyal. Its traditions, of which it is proud, are strictly adverse to any participation in politics. Its spiritual substance is German. It reflects instinctive Germanic devotion to discipline. Bolshevism found it adamant. The uprising in Munich under Hitler clearly showed the army's attitude to the republic. Its vicissitudes have given us military and civil names that will live in history beside those of our great leaders of the war and of former times—the man, for example, who stayed the tide of bolshevism; those who grappled with the task of rebuilding our wrecked social and economic structure; those who kept to their posts in the heaviest seas, and helped to steer our waterlogged craft through the countless rocks on the passage.”

“You refer to men like Ebert, von Seeckt, Noske?”

“To these and many others we owe gratitude. But none seeks prominence; all desire to do their duty to the nation unostentatiously. As long as this sense of duty remains, we face the future, however anxious, not without confidence.”

Asks General Disarmament.

“How does republican Germany look upon disarmament?”

“We have accepted it in principle, and regard it with favor if it be universal. Internationally, Germany already is disarmed. We have neither army nor navy of international meaning. Thus Germany has everything to gain and nothing to lose from the advance of this magnificent ideal. We live encircled by arms and impotent upon the seas. Our frontiers are open—no rivers or mountains to shelter us, as Italy has, as Spain has, as France would like in the Rhine; no command of the air; no protecting waters such as those ridden by Britain's fleet. Germany stands as the world's sole great example of disarmament, waiting for other powers to come up.

“Can there be any effective disarmament except a psychological disarmament? With nations so formidably competent in engineering, mechanics and chemistry, will not war eternally threaten until all faith in war, and all desire to make war, shall have been eradicated from the human mind?

“Psychological disarmament undoubtedly is essential to permanent peace. How is it to be effected and maintained? Heavy wars, like the great war, effect it, but they cannot maintain it.

War Sufferings Breed Peace Desires.

“Consider the privations and sufferings of our nation in the war. Much of this is still unknown abroad. Even our fighting troops had to submit to severe rationing. As early as 1916 the meat rations were restricted, while clothing and outfit were meager. Thus, apart from the physical and moral hardships of modern warfare, the material conditions under which we pursued the war contrasted vividly with the wealth and abundance of the allies' resources, fed mainly from the inexhaustible supplies of America. Our troops were rushed back and forth, from east to west, from Europe to Asia, withstanding strains patently in excess of those of the average allied units. Such causes cannot be without effect. He who knows from experience what war—modern war—means has no eagerness for its re-

nawal. His experience breeds pacifism of the soundest and most durable nature. The German nation is saturated with the knowledge and abhors the thought of further war; it desires peace.

"This sentiment was particularly marked in 1919. Germany at that time not only yearned for peace but believed implicitly in its realization. Upon this psychology we fain would have built great things. We still hope to do so. But here, as in so many directions, policies and actions beyond our control tend to confound and defeat us. All around us we hear the clash of arms. Military inculcations, war talk, drilling, martial pageantry, new ingenuity in munitional engineering—every one of them is an influence for the rearming of Germany psychologically, and to negate such influences transcends human power.

To Preserve Mental Disarmament.

"We deplore the situation. We have youth who know little or nothing of war. They are subject to war infection, as were their predecessors, who went away to battle shouting, laughing and singing. Heavy wars disarm peoples in their minds; only the abolition of the teachings of war and of the objective symbols of war can keep peoples disarmed in their minds. If we are to abolish war we must forget war. If we are to abolish war we must fill the minds and sods of our young with the gospel, the emotions and the images of peace."

"Your feeling is that the world's supreme need is peace?"

"That certainly is my feeling."

"Do you know of a better way than through a league of nations to get peace?"

"No."

"Do you see any peril to nationality or to political and territorial sovereignty in the league as it stands today?"

"So far as I can see, the league, as such, in practice, does not endanger the freedom of will, the independence, the security, of any nation. Great powers, democracies, will avoid any organization that threatens to wrest their destiny from their own hands. Preservation of the democratic prin-

ciple presupposes the operation of local knowledge and control. Peoples are not ready for world federalism—for national autonomies related to an over-riding central authority, as, for example, the American states to Washington or the German states to Berlin. The league of nations, as I understand it, would enthrone reason, justice and peace, not by the crude and ineffectual instrumentality of compulsion, but by a peace-breeding voluntarism based upon international understanding and desire."

Germany Would Join the League.

"Will the German republic join the league?"

"It will join as soon as it may be permitted to join consistently with what it conceives to be its rightful position among the nations. Otherwise it could not join with any prospect of serving itself or mankind. We should want a permanent place on the council, for we are not a minor power. Besides, we should not want the league, with our support, to be identified with ex parte points of view respecting postwar adjustments. We should like its outlook upon world affairs to be uninfluenced by passions, prejudices and political expedients with taproots in the war. This stream of world power, which, as republican Germany hopes, may become a mighty and resistless stream, should not be poisoned at its source."

"What would be the effect of America's joining?"

"Without presuming to suggest to America what she should do in this or any other matter, I should say that American ideals and moral authority cannot be spared from any movement destined to dignify and gladden the world with confidence and tranquillity. Reciprocal trust and peace would be hard enough to get, even with every great nation helping to the limit of its power. It is indispensable to any successful peace movement that it embrace all the principal constituents of human strength in the world."

"Then you would wish Russia to join?"

"I should wish all nations to put their shoulders to the wheel in this superlatively important matter."

International Good Understanding.

"You perceive no way for mankind to progress harmoniously without some kind of body in permanent session functioning for the nations somewhat after the manner of a national government in a system of federated states?"

"I am convinced that the problems common to the nations demand an international body for their regular study and systematic accommodation."

"What do you consider the best method of moving against international ignorance?"

"There are many ways leading to international understanding. The main condition is good will—the wish to understand and come together. Herein lies the great moral duty of the press. Propaganda must be done away with; honesty and sincerity must reign. There are, however, other practical methods; for instance, the interchange of children and young folk. Many thousands of German children found homes and succor in neighboring countries like Holland, Switzerland and Scandinavia, when our country was facing famine after the armistice. These children return to us with hearts full of gratitude and broader minds. They know there are others than Germans whom they can trust and love. Foreign students coming to us and living in German families undergo a similar mental and sentimental change. It is an effective way of internationalizing intelligence and fellow-feeling. Exchange of professors, students, ministers and publicists is excellent. Whoever has the welfare of his own country at heart, and appreciates the universality of the effect of good or ill fortune in any part of the world, will rejoice over all well-judged attempts to moderate excessive nationalism in the interests of the common weal."

Germany's Housing Difficulties.

"What is the housing situation in Germany?"

"It is a situation involving bad living conditions, economic difficulties and political perplexities. We suffer from a great lack of housing accommodation, with its inevitable physical discomforts, moral evils, social detriments

and anxieties for government. During the war we could build no houses. Moreover, we drastically restricted rents, and this restriction operated against house construction. It became necessary for the state to enter upon a large scheme of cheap housing for the people. To this objections have frequently been raised in the foreign press on the ground that it would promote industrial dumping; but we were forced to persist in the scheme, as the homelessness of large numbers of the population was intolerable from the standpoint of both social order and humanity.

"State building revenues were raised from the wealthier classes, and the accommodation accorded to each member of the community was restricted by public law. Our rule was one room for one person. Whoever had more rooms was billeted up with lodgers paying a cheap paper-mark rent. Naturally, there arose a desire on the part of persons of means to buy themselves free from billeting. This was allowed by the state on the basis of a payment sufficient to build as many rooms as were withdrawn from the operation of the rule of one room for one person. Thus a certain sum of money was raised, and a cheap construction program was carried out under the direction of our minister of public welfare. This, to a certain extent, helped to relieve the situation.

"Experience, however, led us more and more to give up administrative control of residential property. It was expensive and, by keeping down the rent, it rendered housebuilding a non-paying business. Besides, this kind of administration had the tendency to lead to corruption. Socialism in this realm failed us. The natural incentive to all industrial production—the prospect of earning interest on the capital outlay and profits thereon—had to be re-established, and we decided to return to the principle of private enterprise. Laws restricting rents are being progressively abolished.

Housing Scarcity Is Still Acute.

"Unhappily, our housing troubles have not yet gone. Rents are rising rapidly and the cost of living is following them. Higher costs of living call

for more wages and more wages bring back the threat of inflation. Nevertheless, we have taken our decision in favor of trusting capitalistic principles to resuscitate the building trade, and we shall stand by this decision. There is not sufficient capital available on our money market to produce a building boom. Still, we hope the mere fact of housing properties becoming an attractive investment may lead to an increased construction of houses that will mean less unemployment and hence a lightening of the burdens of the state in this respect.

"There is a group of broad facts which strikingly reveals the genesis of our housing problem. For five years during the war house building in Germany was dead. Several hundred thousand young men came home from the war eager to get married and start housekeeping. Engaged couples had one reply for the question, 'When is the wedding to be?' It was, 'When we can find a house.' One year, a year and a half, three years of waiting—it was and still is so all over Germany. Immigrants flowed in upon us from east and west; immigrants from the ceded territories; fugitives expelled from the Ruhr and the Rhineland; thousands of people from Russia, Galicia, Poland and the dismembered Austro-Hungarian empire; Germans from the east and the Baltic; boatloads of Germans turned out of countries in which they had found homes and occupation before the war—about 2,000,000 of them in all."

No Secret Army of Aggression.

"One hears that Germany is a nation of tax-dodgers; that monetary penalties are, or were, of no avail because of the worthlessness of the mark; that both civil and criminal law in the republic is discredited; that the great industrialists, not the rich, are Germany; that the republican government cannot subdue these industrialists; that it is impotent before extra-constitutional military societies financed by the treasuries of big industry; that a masked army of aggression is in process of integration. What can we say on these heads?"

"Take the last point first. There is in Germany only one military force of

the slightest consequence as such—the reichswehr, our army. It stands unflinchingly for the republic. It stands for law and order within our borders and for peace beyond them—the republic's policy, from which on no account will it depart. This myth of a nascent German army of aggression should be dismissed from men's minds once for all. It is a source of nothing but universal evil, warping thought, disfiguring policy, buttressing militarism, postponing reconstruction, dashing the hopes of settled peace.

"Property, in the days immediately following the war, when there was a general menace of bolshevism, anarchy and crimes of violence, and when our military resources were compulsorily inadequate to control such a situation—property, including the great industries, sought to defend itself by privately employed guards. These were magnified into the potential units of a formidable army. They never were such and still less are they such now. With the growth of governmental power and a return of the normal orderliness of the German people, these guards, or so-called military bands, became unnecessary and were suppressed. Similarly, we have suppressed as an element of possible disturbance and danger, our fascist or more extreme and demonstrative nationalists. They are not allowed to make military preparations of any kind.

Ways of German Industrialists.

"Now as to tax-dodging, collapse of law and the alleged puissance and implied disloyalty of the leaders of German industry. Again, let us take the last point first. German industrialists are no more an element apart in German life than are American industrialists in American life or the industrialists of any other country in the life of that country. Our industrialists are German, believe in Germany, love Germany and serve Germany according to their light. What motive or interest could they have in dishonoring her, in despoiling her, in spreading misery and desperation among her people? They have their ideas about government and policy, as have the rest of us. But they are not seditious."

ists and they are not trying to establish an industrial tyranny.

"As regards tax-dodging, I suppose the practice is not wholly unknown in most countries, and even in normal times. Law enforcement, too, always presents difficulties quite generally. Our times for a good many years have not been normal times. We have passed through conditions unforeseeable and unimaginable—have trodden perhaps the strangest and most bewildering ground in the whole march of human history. Economic and social disorganization we have plumbed to its depths. We have witnessed financial vagaries that made our best-trained minds reel. In the midst of our embarrassments, falling thick and fast, rushing upon us from unexpected directions, established experience and doctrinaire thinking alike seemed a mockery.

Germany's "Flight of Capital."

"There was the so-called 'flight of capital.' Exporters and industrialists selling their goods abroad hesitated to convert foreign money into paper marks for fear of the losses threatening by depreciation. Besides, they frequently had to purchase their raw materials from abroad and required foreign currency for such transactions. Thus deposits were accumulated abroad sometimes, no doubt, in excess of actual requirements.

"But also the great mass of wage-earners and consumers was forced through the effects of depreciation to depart from sound economic principles. Germans were the thriftiest people in Europe. They loved to work and save. It was their life. Monetary depreciations swept away this great, primitive, sustaining instinct by making any kind of saving impossible. Every one's preoccupation was not to save his earnings but to spend them as quickly as he could, lest they turn to nothing in his hands. Boys and girls, told by their parents to be saving, to hold their money, laughed at the advice. 'Do you think us idiots?' they said. Even public officials formerly completely unconservative with investment transactions, when they received their salaries ran as fast as they could to the stock exchange to convert their

money into shares. What else could they do to avoid the consequences of depreciation and still maintain some kind of liquid capital?

"It was the same everywhere—this amazing spectacle, this indescribable national moral and material tragedy of agonized earners, by nature provident, dropping their money as if it were on fire. Money is a marvelous thing in a nation. Stable, of fixed worth, enjoying universal confidence, it is not merely a medium of exchange; it is a preserver of values; it is the bedrock of national morale. Destroy its stability and you shock your civilization into ruins. If we have had turbulence; if we have had anarchy; if we have had a collapse of civil and criminal law; if we have shown many signs of a nation shattered and desperate, it has been because, and only because, our people were bereft of everything that makes social sanity and discipline possible.

The Bankruptcy of a Nation.

"On the other hand, gold-standard currencies rushed into Germany as air into a vacuum. Foreigners flocked hither to scoop up our inflated marks, exchange them for full-value German commodities and retire enriched. From a neutral country, for example, there came a man for a little recreation in Berlin. He lived well at a fashionable hotel, bought in the Unter den Linden a beautiful German gold watch for the mark yield of a few gold notes, returned home and sold his watch for a sufficient profit to cover all his expenses in Germany. Thus the wealth still remaining in the country after the war was subjected to a heavy drain.

"German employers, like their employes, ran a breathless race with the descent of the mark. Accustomed to pay their workers monthly, they began to pay weekly and finally daily, to minimize the losses from depreciation. For the same reason the workers no sooner received their marks than they hurried to get rid of them for something that would retain its value.

"All state functions were harried correspondingly. Money received for taxes lost its value while in course of collection. Obligations were put off

in order that they might be met with cheaper currency. Crimes against property multiplied, for necessitous people were disposed to take what the fruits of their labor would not buy. Men and women went into the forests for wood and into the fields for potatoes. Such crimes were punished in accordance with the law, but penalties were often futile against cold and hunger.

"Contradictory views were held of what should or could be done. We passed highly restrictive and punitive legislation against the flight of capital. All privacy of commercial and banking accounts was set aside. Our methods resembled the bolshevistic inquisition. We turned on the taxation screw as far as practicable. We obtained what foreign currency we could to pay reparations. But, in the end, all expedients failed, bankruptcy was complete and payments under the treaty of Versailles ceased.

The Tragedy of the Falling Mark.

"It is asserted that we voluntarily extinguished the value of the mark by inflation. On the contrary, we frantically fought to maintain the standard of our money, realizing that depreciation meant confiscation; that lifelong savings would be snuffed out; that the middle and working classes would be impoverished; that the national morale would undergo an unprecedented strain and that our entire social order might be engulfed in disaster. Not any desire of ours, nor any fault or default of ours reduced the mark to worthless paper; this calamity befell us because of the imposition upon our war-weakened country of burdens greater than it could bear.

"We are accused, again, of governmental connivance with industrial and commercial cleverness in 'siphoning' wealth out of Germany in the form of the gold deposits abroad derived from the sale of German exports to which I have already referred. It is the allegation that these credits were left in foreign countries to evade reparations payments. Precisely the contrary is the truth. We were struggling to maintain our domestic economy and to discharge the obligations fixed by the treaty of Versailles. To do these

things it was indispensable that our industrial and commercial apparatus should work. If this apparatus worked we must get food and raw materials from other countries, and such commodities were not to be had for the degraded mark. Such accumulations of foreign credit by German exporters as were permitted by the German government—and our laws were as stringent as our observation was vigilant—were intended to keep German life and production going, not only to meet domestic needs but to make reparations payments.

Individuality of Foreign Credits.

"If some exporters built up larger foreign credits than the German laws intended they should—and this is not impossible—it was not because of, but in spite of, the policy and the endeavors of the reich. Our thought and energy in the Wilhelmstrasse were ever directed not to give special help or privileges to the trading community or to any other class of our population but to serve the commonwealth, whose interests we believed would be advanced by honestly meeting, so far as possible, all the obligations of the government.

"Some persons talk as if it were easy for the German government to enter foreign banks and levy upon German credits there. At the first hint of such a thing American competent circles immediately pointed out its impossibility. Attempts to institute inquiries looking to an appraisal of German credits in the banks of European countries proved futile at the outset, as no country would ever tolerate such interference in its banking business. The sanctity of private property would not permit of any such measure. And we ourselves have that feeling. It probably is not far from the truth to say that to overturn the principle of the inviolability of private property is to overturn the fundament of our present social and economic organization. So much for the charges that the German republic deliberately committed against its people the crime of inflation and aided and abetted its exporters in an organized attempt to swindle the beneficiaries of the treaty of Versailles."

Potential Wealth, Actual Poverty.

"One hears that Germany is rich and also that she is poor."

"In a sense, she is both. Potentially, Germany is rich; she has certain natural and the sociological elements of great national wealth and power. Actually, German is not only poor but bankrupt. She has the plant for a vast industry, agricultural and commercial, but she has no working capital. Great as were her trading activities during the quarter of a century before the war, she had not time to accumulate the huge reserves of capital of the older business communities. She had relatively little amassed wealth; what she had was consumed during the war, delivered up under the treaty of Versailles, or has evaporated by depreciation.

"Capitalistic industrialism without liquid capital is like a living organism drained of blood; it is a dead frame. Economically Germany is no longer a vital phenomenon; she is a gigantic skeleton. Understanding, wisdom, forbearance abroad, together with German skill, labor, and thrift at home, can reclothe this skeleton with strong sinew and healthy flesh, and reirrigate its arteries with blood; ignorance, folly, aggression from outside will arrest rebuilding processes inside, and we shall see an irreparable crumbling of the skeleton's bones. Censure of other governments we wish to avoid; we hope their own complexities and perplexities will aid them in appreciating those of the government of the German republic."

Striving for a Balanced Budget.

"Will you explain how it finally became possible for you to return to the gold standard—to establish the rentenmark?"

"In much of our discussion, necessarily, for the purposes of full explanation to those who have not been in position to follow recent German history as closely as Germans have followed it, we have been looking backward; our view has been retrospective; we have been examining past phases in the quick-moving drama of post-war German life. There are those who ask, 'Why did you not establish the rentenmark sooner? Why did you

not earlier take a firm stand against the slump of your money?' My answer is, 'Because it was impossible.'

"Why was it impossible? It was impossible because the total of our inescapable expenditures was far greater than our wealth-producing capacity. We could get nowhere near a balancing of our budget, and the balanced budget, needless to say, is the sine qua non of national solvency and of the corollary of national solvency—stable currency. Our problem, so far as reparations were concerned—and reparations were only one of our difficulties—was incalculably aggravated by the fact that we could not ascertain what was demanded of us. We were required to shovel against a heap of sand, the sand always running down upon us, and no light reaching us as to when the task would end. It is a kind of labor that almost no conceivable leadership can—if it ought—induce a nation to perform.

Lesson of France's Difficulties.

"France, in recent weeks, has been experiencing some of the trials that come to an incumbered nation in connection with its currency. There has been a struggle to save the franc. If the franc has been hard pressed, if it has fallen, if extraordinary measures have been imperative to avert its fall, who can wonder that the mark lost its value? France had the powerful financial support of America and England during the war, and those countries have not required her to pay even interest on her debt. Furthermore, France retained all her extensive colonies—even increased her colonial domain—and maintained full economic liberty.

"France has been collecting from Germany since the war. Germany herself financed her entire war outlay—borrowed nothing from abroad—and shouldered military occupation expenses and reparations deliveries after the war. France, of course, had her vast burden of reconstruction in her devastated territories; but, when all is said, Germany's financial burdens were immensely heavier. As France did not deliberately sink the franc, so Germany did not deliberately sink the mark.

"Return to stable currency in Germany was out of the question while we were floundering in a financial region of bottomless quicksand.

Stability of the Rentenmark.

"The rentenmark, so far a successful experiment, based on the experience gained through similar previous attempts made in other countries during the last century and avoiding the errors committed on such former occasions, rests upon just one thing—German solvency. German solvency may have come to stay, and it may not. If it goes, as it went before, it seems inevitable that the rentenmark will go, as the mark went. Our temporary monetary stability is the result of heroic financial efforts made possible by suspending reparations payments and reducing internal expenditures to the iron minimum.

"Impossible reparations demands—which, happily, we hope the combined foreign experience and judgment focused upon the problem will avert—would crush the foundations of the rentenmark, and involve not only Germany but Europe in continuing disaster. We require a moratorium, or credits, or both, and we require the prudent consideration of those in whose power it lies to prevent us from helping either ourselves or them."

Religious Sentiment in Germany.

"Is religious feeling strong or weak among the people?"

"Reduced in material fortunes and psychologically depressed, our people in general have sought solace and strength in religion. We have greater church attendances than before the war. This return of the people to religion has been strongly stimulated by the humanitarian work of religious organizations, such as the Catholic church and the Quakers, and by a national reaction against the spirit of war and against the atheistic tenets of socialism. Socialism, indeed, in the crush of events in Germany since the war, would seem to have shown many shortcomings, economically and spiritually."

"What are the moral habits and tendencies of the young?"

"Enforced simplification of life has benefited our boys and girls. It has made them less affected, more serious, keener on healthful pleasures. Our young of the better classes are more democratic. Snobbishness is diminished. We see fewer monocles, patent leather shoes and other signs of dandyism. Girls' dresses are simpler. Our young folk walk more and motor less. Life's responsibilities have a larger place in their thoughts. Similar remarks apply to the working classes; there is a more natural mode of life all around. But it is true that pastors, social workers and teachers complain of other post-war developments; order and discipline among the rising generation have been loosened, respect for authority shattered by the tide of revolution and its after effects; thrift and economy, as already shown, have lost their educational value. The lack of universal military training, with its healthful influence on the bodies and minds of our young men—its education in obedience and self-command—is here perceptible."

Beneficial After Effects of War.

"Motion pictures, the press, the platform, literature, art, in Germany—are they tending to consolidate or to disintegrate character?"

"On the whole, I should say, their influence has not proved to be detrimental. The newspapers and the book trade in Germany suffered severely under the economic consequences of publishers turned to the printing of foreign books, paid for in foreign currencies. More normal publishing conditions, however, have returned of late and the country is the gainer.

"In general, it may be said that the sufferings of the war and its after effects have produced certain beneficial results—simpler life, devotion to work, a desire for spiritual and ethical elevation to replace the materialistic assets lost—and that this development is also reflected in the different forms of public expression."

Ideals of Present-Day Germany.

"What are the basic ideals of modern Germany?"

"In a phrase, to build up a happy, prosperous and powerful democracy,

dedicated to peace and to civilization. Our conception of education is democratic. It opens the door of advancement to all our people. We believe in and seek humanistic culture, but we also bear in mind the popular need for vocational training. It is our aim to draw upon both classicism and vocationalism in the interests of the republic itself and in the interests of those responsibilities which it shares with other nations.

"Individual liberty is the fundamental of fundamentals of the constitution of the federation. Personal destiny in no respect is committed to human hands; it is committed to the law. Contrary, in certain particulars, to the situation under the empire, our citizens are free to migrate, to emigrate, to worship, to work as they will. Men and women have complete legal, civic and political equality, whether of right or of duty. Marriage, the foundation of family life, rests upon the equal rights of both sexes.

"It is our purpose as a state, while safeguarding the liberty of the citizen and making of his home an individual sanctuary, to collaborate with him in preserving the purity, health and social progression of the family. Motherhood, in our view, has a special claim upon the protection and care of the republic. Opportunities shall be provided by law equalizing the advantages, bodily, mental and social, of illegitimate children with those of legitimate children. Every care will be taken to promote in every practicable way the vigor, sanity and happiness of the rising generation.

Elements of Freedom and Equality.

"We have no state church, but levy taxes for the support of all creeds and denominations in accordance with their numerical strength. These taxes enable the various religious bodies to devote all of their collections to the charities of their choice. Freedom of religion, of the press, of assembly, of speech, of art, science and teaching is guaranteed under our constitution. Our education is free and compulsory to the eighteenth year. Private schools require the approval of the state and there must be no separation of pupils having reference to the means of their

parents. It is a provision of the constitution that our education shall be directed to the reconciliation of nations. Every pupil, upon completion of school attendance, receives a copy of the constitution.

"In ultimate essentials the constitution of the German republic, I believe, closely resembles the constitution of the United States. In some respects our system corresponds to that of Great Britain. In other respects it follows American lines and in still other respects we have singularities of our own. Like the American and unlike the British constitution, ours is written; we have a feeling in such things for definition and relative rigidity. Like the British and unlike the American constitution ours empowers the president of the federation, within limits, to dissolve the reichstag; we favor a prompt method of liquidating deadlocks. There are other differences, but all these instruments of government, as I understand them, presuppose that supreme power proceeds from the people and aspire to forward a vigorous, humane and peaceful social evolution, based upon the principles of property rights and popular liberty."

Light Needed to Give Peace.

"What might one transmit, by way of final word, as republican Germany's message to other states and peoples?"

"Our appeal is for justice in judgment, for fair treatment in spirit, for mutuality of forbearance and respect. I do not wish to discuss the question of the responsibility for the war. I merely would say, in this connection, that no one can understand the German people or have in them the confidence they deserve, if such person imagines them capable of deliberately and wantonly setting out to slay and conquer. Mankind in no part of the world is more inclined to peace and to international friendship than are the Germans.

"It is misunderstanding that causes war. Misunderstanding breeds fear and animosity and the spirit of slaughter. It follows that the world needs light—needs international education. As soon as Germany, now struggling in the thicket of political and economic disorganization, can free her limbs and

see her way out of the forest, she will be ready and eager to do her part, both by precept and by example, to advance humanity toward the goal of peace. Progress in that direction, in my opinion, is possible only through concentration of effort, internation-

ally organized. Such an organization would be a clearing house of world information and a focal point of world confidence. It is such a role that Germany would wish to see the league of nations fulfill."

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ITALY'S REBIRTH

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Premier Mussolini Tells of
Fascismo's Purposes

By EDWARD PRICE BELL

THE CHICAGO DAILY NEWS
1924

Bell Edward Price

ITALY'S REBIRTH

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OF

THE CHICAGO DAILY NEWS

MUSSOLINI, APOSTLE OF FASCISMO.



Al Signor Enrico Tineo
indispettito
Roma, maggio 1924
Mussolini

ITALY'S STRONG MAN DESCRIBED

An extraordinary feat in politico-journalistic teamwork has been accomplished in Rome by three men—Benito Mussolini, president of his Italian majesty's council, the man interviewed; Edward Price Bell of The Daily News' special foreign staff, who did the interviewing, and Hiram Kelly Moderwell, Rome correspondent of The Daily News, who did the interpreting.

Mr. Moderwell writes of the scene at the interview:

"It took place in the magnificent Chigi palace, Italy's present foreign office, in the largest and most splendid room of the palace—that of President Mussolini—at midday, with the din of the Roman streets muffled by thick walls, and with the white Italian light flooding over the forceful apostle of fascism at his gigantic desk.

"Our hopes—Mr. Bell's and mine—had fallen low as we waited in an outer reception room. There were three of these rooms, each big enough for a house, and all were crowded with visitors to see the president. There were admirals and generals in their handsome uniforms. There were dignified, solemn-faced, frock-coated officials and committeemen from all over Italy. There were men of science and men of diplomacy.

Keeps Appointment on the Minute.

"How could the president, in circumstances like these, find even a moment for a newspaper interview?

"But Mussolini is Mussolini. On the instant of our appointment a secretary came through a lofty doorway and called out, 'Mr. Price Bell!' We followed him along several corridors and through two or three ante-chambers to the door of the president's room. There we paused for a few seconds. Then the secretary turned the knob, opened the door, and the vast office of Mussolini lay before us. We had entered at one corner; diagonally across the great expanse of the room in the farthest corner from us sat Mussolini at his desk by a wide, towering window.

"One's glance involuntarily swept over the room, despite the magnetism of the man. Its walls are hung with

battle-axes and strange gray tapestries. There is little furniture, accentuating the immense space. The floor is of beautifully grained hardwood, smooth as glass.

Brilliant Listener and Talker.

"Mussolini rose, stepped from behind his desk and walked quickly toward us, erect and stern in bearing, like a soldier. He met us almost half-way, shook hands firmly and cordially, turned and retraced his steps to his chair. There were no hesitations, no preliminaries. Conversation began at once. Occasionally Mussolini used English, occasionally French, but nearly always his own musical and brilliant Italian. He was alternately animated and grave, his fine eyes sometimes gleaming playfully, sometimes reflecting what he has passed through since the outbreak of the great war and what he has faced in his position of supreme political responsibility in Italy.

"We were alone. When I saw Mussolini two years ago in a modest hotel room in Cannes, a young black-shirt stood beside me, rifle in hand, motionless during a two-hour interview. But here Mussolini, without guards or secretaries and clad in a smartly-cut morning suit, was no longer dictator of an extra-legal militia, but first minister of the king. He listened. He listened intently, his hands relaxed on the arms of his chair, his head bowed. He seemed to concentrate as much energy on listening as do most orators on speaking."

Word Picture of Mussolini.

Mr. Bell writes these impressions of the remarkable man whom he interviewed:

"He is not tall, or raw-boned, or pretty. He is somewhat short and decidedly well-fleshed, but not fat. Those who see mental and moral rather than physical features will, I think, call him handsome. Nor is he at all bad-looking physically. His dark-brown eyes are the talk of Italy.

"Mussolini is intensely egoistic and quintessentially Italian. Some might call him affected. I put down his mannerisms not to affectation but to individuality. He is too serious, too reflective, too sensible of the weight of his cares, too sincere, to be affected.

As he talked, now sitting at his huge, flat-topped desk; now rising, pushing back the tails of his morning coat and thrusting his hands into his trousers pockets; sometimes advancing his face close to mine and looking hard into my eyes, his right arm uplifted; sometimes appearing to forget I was there, turning away and pitching his words into space—as he did these things I felt in the presence less of a man than of a flesh-and-blood embodiment of a great national passion.

"Mussolini has a luminous and powerful intellect. But it is not his intellect that astonishes one. It is his genius. It is his spirit. It is the fire in him. It is his self-forgetfulness. It is the depth and mystery of his personality. It is his courage; one can easily see him, on the instant and even eagerly, facing death for his principles, as he has done many times.

Not Dictator but Liberator.

"One way, and an accurate way, of describing Mussolini is to say that he is everything neutralism is not. 'It is necessary to act, to move, to fight, perhaps to die,' he says. This is virtually the alpha and omega of his feeling and philosophy.

"They call him dictator. To the unpatriotic, to the antisocial and anticivilized, to the lawless, to the bolshevists, he is dictator. To Italy—full of sterling human worth as it is full of natural beauty and of historical glory—to Italy, in my judgment, Mussolini is liberator.

"I should be sorry to have these words taken as mere rhetoric. I am trying to give some idea of a man who has captivated a great people and recreated a nation. I am trying to give some idea of a man who has impressed Europe profoundly; who in my opinion has served Europe vitally, and who has become a portent and a promise in the civilization of the world."

REBIRTH OF ITALY THROUGH FASCISMO.

BY EDWARD PRICE BELL.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENCE
Of The Chicago Daily News Foreign Service.
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Rome, Italy, May 6.—"Fascismo, Sig. Mussolini, is the phenomenon we wish to try to understand."

"First, fascismo is not merely a party or a movement wholly consumed in the field of politics. It was not born in Italy of a group of people who had elaborated, fixed and made popular a series of solutions of predetermined problems in the life and administration of the Italian state. Fascismo is a spiritual movement. It took form spontaneously among our people, and at a certain point issued in an unforeseen, impulsive and very great manifestation.

"To place before oneself the problem of the elements contributing to determine this spiritual movement is to place before oneself the most profound and interesting of the historical problems of modern Italy, and perhaps of the contemporary world. Italian life has presented for centuries the curious phenomenon of a disequilibrium between the height, the fineness and the energy of our civilization and the inadequacy of our education in citizenship.

Education in Citizenship.

"This problem, which the purest and greatest spirit of modern Italy, Dante Alighieri, perceived at the moment when the middle ages closed, was left by the risorgimento, not perhaps untouched but far from a solution. For centuries it has tormented the best consciences of Italy. It has been the agony of the noblest Italian thinkers. It was the very last thought of the dying Cavour. And, unity having been accomplished, it remained for Massimo d'Azeglio to define the problem in a phrase that has become very popular among us: 'Italy is made; now we must make Italians.'

"Fascismo is the greatest experiment in our history in making Italians. What do I mean by 'making Italians'? I mean creating in Italy an education in citizenship. I mean creating something to destroy this disequilibrium between Italian civilization and Italian political life—this evil which has perturbed our history through all these generations."

How the Movement Was Born.

"When did the movement take tangible form?"

"It was born materially in 1919, but its origins are further back. Many years before the war the youngest,

freshet and most energetic Italian spirits were trying impetuously to break the noose that seemed to be binding and suffocating our young state. They were many, but separated. Every one of them was following a dream. With not a few it was a dream of a socialism that had nothing at all to do with the barbaric desire to destroy society, or with the miserable questions of thine and mine—a socialism expressing above all a desire for liberation and spiritual renewal.

"When the great war broke out, many Italians perceived not only that the historical exigencies of Italy made necessary our participation in the war, but that the war had given an extraordinary and powerful impulse to the national integration of the Italian people. In every party, even among the extreme socialists, developed an enthusiasm for war. These prowar groups were compelled to vanquish the old political class in Italy—a class insensible to the true historical problem of modern Italy and to the vital value the war would have in Italian history.

Saving the War's Spiritual Fruits.

"At the close of the struggle, with victory established, this caste of politicians, profiting by the popular reaction following the frightful bloodshed and suffering, arose once more to regain the upper hand and to take possession of the state. The state, during the years of the war, became identified with the 5,000,000 young Italians who had served in the army. These fresh and valiant spirits, of the stuff that crushed anti-interventionism, feared that their elimination from public affairs by the old caste would mean the destruction of the spiritual fruits of the war to the deadly detriment of Italian life.

"For four years the battle was waged bitterly between the old and the new order. In 1922 the new order conquered, as the interventionists had conquered in 1915. Thus you see fascismo is not only a movement of armed reaction against revolutionary disorder, but a phase in the history of the Italian people, which, having achieved the unity of its national territory, wished to achieve a higher form of spiritual power."

"Fascismo, then, is both subjective and objective?"

"Yes; it is a thing of the soul, and a thing of practical politics. It is emotion, theory and practice; it is sentiments, ideas and acts; it is something felt, something thought and something done. Fascismo is a spiritual inspiration, a body of doctrine and a system of state policy. It is morally resolute and intellectually precise. Its ultimate springs must be sought in Italian history and Italian consciousness. As an abstraction, fascismo is as old as man's sense of beauty of great ideals; as a concretion, it is a thing expressing itself in the lives of Italian youth—a thing of energy and daring and a thing inflexibly committed to the principle of sacrifice."

Character of Italy's Sacrifice.

"What do you mean, exactly, by 'sacrifice'?"

"I mean giving up a little to gain enormously more. Social welfare is, at one and the same time, the sum of individual sacrifices and the salvation of the individual. Life is safe, property is safe, personal liberty is safe, constitutionalism survives, only if individuals and classes offer up their selfish interests on the altar of social well-being. Six hundred thousand Italian boys sacrificed their lives, and more than a million sacrificed bodily soundness, in order that Italian territory might be inviolate and Italian citizens free. Our armies fought for nothing else. Considered by itself, it seems and is a colossal sacrifice; but it was a little thing to give for Italy.

"When we ask labor to be just to capital, or ask capital to be just to labor; when we ask either to forego a ruthless use of its power in its own apparent immediate interests; when we ask both to be socially conscious and considerate, we are urging the principle of sacrifice. But it is that kind of sacrifice which serves both him who makes it and him for whom it is made. It is the only principle compatible with orderly and happy human life. When the fascisti destroyed bolshevism in Italy—those who hate bolshevism will love us, and those who love bolshevism will hate us—they compelled the bolshevists to make a sacrifice. It was the sacrifice, however, of only the

INTERVIEW APPROVED BY MUSSOLINI



Ministero degli Affari Esteri
Il Capo in Cabinetto

Roma, 30 aprile 1924

Egregio Signore;

S.E. il Presidente ha letto accuratamente il resoconto che Ella ha scritto della sua intervista con lui e ha trovato che il suo pensiero è stato da Lei fedelmente riprodotto.

Egli La felicità e La ringrazia del diligente lavoro che Ella ha compiuto e Le invia la fotografia che Ella troverà qui acclusa, come ricordo della interessante Sua visita e come riconoscimento della utile opera che Ella svolge per una chiara, sincera e diretta conoscenza nel pubblico americano del pensiero degli uomini di Stato d'Europa.

Mi abbia, con i migliori saluti

Sig. Edward PRICE BELL
Hôtel de Russie

ROMA

dm
Paulucci de Calboli

FOLLOWING is a translation of the letter from Baron Paulucci di Calboli, Mussolini's chief of cabinet, announcing the president's approval of Mr. Bell's report of their interview and authorizing its publication:

"Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
"The Chief of Cabinet.

"Rome, April 30, 1924.

"Dear Sir:

"His excellency, the president, has accurately read the transcript which you have written of your interview with him and has found that his thought has been faithfully reproduced by you.

"He congratulates you and thanks you for the diligent work which you have done and sends you the photograph which you will find herewith, as a souvenir of your interesting visit and as a recognition of the useful task which you are accomplishing in the interest of a clear, sincere and direct knowledge in the American public of the thought of the statesmen of Europe.

"Believe me, with cordial good wishes,
"Yours,

"PAULUCCI DE CALBOLI, Baron.

"Mr. Edward Price Bell,
"Hotel de Russie, Rome."

privilege the bolshevists were claiming to ruin us all, including themselves.

Fascismo Opposed to False Liberty.

"It cannot be too strongly affirmed that fascismo is not an enemy of true liberty. It is an enemy of false liberty. It is an enemy of the liberty of one person or of any group of persons to take away the liberty of another person, or of the nation as a whole. Our point of view is that, when we assert the rights of society we are asserting the rights of every member and of every element belonging to that society. No individual rights or liberties are secure in a state whose national rights and liberties are not secure. Upon social justice rests all justice; social justice is essential to social equilibrium; and social equilibrium is another name for civilization.

"Fascismo has committed acts of force; I neither deny nor condemn them. It had colossal difficulties to overcome. Civil war is one of the saddest phenomena of history, but it is not so sad as is the degradation of high national aims. Cromwell and Lincoln faced civil war. And who shall say that the blood shed at Gettysburg contributed less than did the blood shed in the war of independence to the unity and greatness of the American nation? The Romans used to say, 'resecare advivum.' Fascismo has been obliged to cut into the living flesh to restore the health of the Italian nation. It remembers its dead with passion and with reverence, and considers that they died, not for fascismo but for Italy.

Why Italian Strikes Were Stopped.

"When we suppressed maniacal and disastrous strikes in Italy, particularly in the postal and other public utility services, there was an outcry in some quarters that we were trampling upon liberty. Upon what liberty? If we were trampling upon liberty, we were trampling upon no liberty except that of the labor agitators to overthrow the state, to enslave the people, to destroy industry and commerce, to threaten our peninsula with famine, and to wipe out the priceless heritage of generations of Italian valor, culminating at Vittorio Veneto. To that sort of liberty fascismo is, verily, an enemy. And let it be remembered, in connection with all this, that when we struck at

the monstrous pretensions of the walking delegates we did not offend honest labor; we lifted up honest labor's heart from the Alps to the Ionian sea.

"It is said that fascismo is aristocratic. So it is. It believes in a civilization of high ethics and high culture. But in what respect is the spirit of a people, of the common people—I never flatter them—disassociated in sympathy from high ethics and high culture? Fascismo's aristocracy is the aristocracy of the spirit, the aristocracy of order, of law, against the tumult of the instincts and of popular passions. Charges against me and against fascismo of hostility to the workers are grotesque.

Fascismo's Attitude Toward Labor.

"Work! Who works more than I, with dozens of committees coming into this room every day and with appeals continually flung on my desk reflecting the urgent needs of the 8,000 communes of Italy—appeals, by the way, not for the 'liberty' our opponents declare our people have lost, but for aid in improving the living conditions and safeguarding the health of the masses. Work I regard as the highest virtue of man and as the most powerful manifestation of the health of a people. Italian workers were among the original fascisti, and to-day fascismo has a strong majority of them, together with small bourgeoisie who are nearer to the working class than to what you call the middle class. But I prefer that fascismo's attitude toward labor should be deduced from its conception of the state, which belongs to no one unless to those who serve it; and the square-cornered, firm, solid, unruffled Italian worker serves his country no less than does any one else."

"Your creed of liberty embraces the economic field?"

"I am for the greatest economic liberty. The strong state does not in the least mean the state that wishes to do everything for itself and by itself. On the contrary, I am convinced that the stronger the state the greater is the effective liberty within which the economic life develops. Economic enterprise has as much need of liberty at home as of security abroad."

Clearing the Ground.

"Fascismo has been destructive as well as constructive?"

"Oh, yes. It had a great fabric to erect—the fabric of a new Italy—and the building site was badly cumbered. It was cumbered by the debris of socialistic and demagogic wrongs and failures. Unwarranted privileges, corrupt politics, bolshevistic madness, uneconomic laws, called for removal. House rent ordinances were confiscating property, paralyzing building and opening before tens of thousands of people the prospect of no roof to cover their heads. Radical laws and regulations shielded strikers. Confiscatory inheritance duties were discouraging thrift and small property and driving capital out of the country. All these deadweights, these postwar deposits, fascismo swept from the building site of Italian national life—not always, perhaps, doing its work too tenderly—before commencing the erection of the new state."

"What are some of the constructive achievements?"

"Italy's budget balanced; war fetters on liberty and property broken; confiscatory land legislation scrapped; limited suffrage granted to women; religion reintroduced into the public schools; majority rule asserted over coalescing minorities; tax dodgers rounded up; paper circulation decreased; popular savings enormously increased; death duties abolished in the interest of the family group; outflow of Italian capital stopped and inflow of foreign capital started; the lira appreciated; labor given the eight-hour day; value of government securities enhanced; railroad traffic augmented; strikes abolished and unemployment reduced almost to the vanishing point."

Effects of Immigration Laws.

"Italy is tranquil. Italy is working. The equal of her stability is scarcely to be found in Europe. Yet the Italian people are grievously taxed. Proportionately to their economic possibilities they are bearing a greater tax burden than any other people in the world. Our economic situation, and consequently our living conditions, are made worse by foreign immigration laws, which diminish our capacity for finding work for our people."

"What is your opinion of the immigration policy apparently foreshadowed in America?"

Sig. Mussolini was standing when I asked this question. He fixed his dark brown eyes upon mine, lifted his right hand, and said slowly and solemnly:

"I should think it very sad if America shut her gates against the people who produced her discoverer. Selective immigration——"

He stopped, sat down and bent over a paper on his desk. One knew what he meant. He meant that, as Italians see it, proposals not based upon the principle of selection for fitness, but based upon the principle of race or nationality, seem to find favor in Washington. Thoughtful Italians regard themselves and Americans as ethnologically the two youngest nations of the world—both old stocks modified by innumerable foreign incursions, both melting pots, but both retaining unimpaired their racial primalities. Such Italians feel that neither Italo-Americans nor their brethren at home have done anything to forfeit American confidence in them as American citizens. Quite the contrary is the belief, and by way of proof one is reminded of the record of Italo-American soldiers in France and of Italian soldiers on the precipitous battlefields of the Alps.

Italy Too Small for Its People.

"Sig. Mussolini, we should like very much to have your honest view of this immigration matter."

"It is a matter of deep interest and real importance to Italy. Our emotions are enlisted because of our historical and cultural relations with America, and because of our nationalistic identity. Vast numbers of Italians have gone to America, have become loyal American citizens, have fought for America, and yet know and love Italy. These Italo-Americans, as we regard them, are an invaluable link between our civilizations, and a force for the integration of the world. Those of our citizens who go to America and return to us are an influence for Italo-American understanding, and whatever promotes such understanding is a beneficent thing for both countries."

"We are by no means ignorant of America's difficulties in respect of im-

migration. Her right and duty to protect herself against undesirable aliens are clear. Italy, certainly, would not dream of asking her to accept immigrants likely to burden or embarrass her. We do not want to send our diseased or insane or dangerous people to the United States. It is of sound Italians we are thinking when we discuss immigration with your country. Our peninsula is too small, too rocky, too hilly, too mountainous, to support our 40,000,000 and their increase. Only a third of the little land we have is tillable and we possess few mineral resources.

Turn Naturally Toward America.

"In a word, we are subject to great and growing emigratory pressure, and our people naturally turn toward Columbia. They are good workers, sensible folk, orderly by nature, healthy in mind and body, heirs of a long and triumphant historical struggle; they will be a source of strength, not of weakness, to any society they join. We feel it strange that any one's ideas on immigration in America should appear to favor Germans, for example, over Italians. Only the other day Americans and Italians were fighting together to defeat Germanic tyranny. Besides, there is much greater social unrest in Germany and much more bolshevism than there is in Italy.

"I do not wish to say anything harsh about the Germans, or about any other people. Neither do I wish to be understood as suggesting that America should admit fewer Germans within her gates. I merely am intimating that I should find it hard to reconcile any American immigration proposals more favorable to Germans than to Italians with what I conceive to be a rightful appreciation of the virtues of my fellow-countrymen. Italy's need for larger opportunities for her people was greatly increased by her material sacrifices in the general struggle for freedom. This struggle not only wrecked our economic life but put upon our taxpayers a debt burden amounting to more than six-tenths of our national wealth. I have confidence that full discussion, attended by mutual sympathy, will result in a happy settlement of the Italo-American immigration problem."

"You would say a sense of dignity lies at the core of nationality?"

"Absolutely. Without a sense of dignity there is no nationality. Without a sense of dignity, indeed, there is no individuality."

Would Pay the War Debts.

"What is your feeling about the war debts?"

"That they should be paid. Debts must be paid. If debts are not paid, there is an end of credit, and it is much better to give up money than to give up credit. Credit is the bedrock of civilization; your Alexander Hamilton was quite right about that. Italy will pay. She cannot pay immediately. She must have time to effect her national economic and financial consolidation. She must have time to work and save."

"You are an idealist, Sig. Mussolini?"

"Yes; but an idealist who believes in the systematic and quick conversion of ideals into bettered conditions of human life."

"How can statesmanship and journalism best serve each other and humanity?"

"By an aggressive and tireless assertion of mental and moral energy. By uttering only the truth. By fearing nothing but infidelity to the truth. By constant readiness to sacrifice themselves for their fellow men."

"What would be your watchword for public men and writers?"

"Fascismo's—'Duty.'"

Character the Basis of All.

"All the time you base yourself upon the moralities?"

"There is nothing else for one to base oneself upon. This is the first tenet of fascismo: Moral character is primary. From the first, fascisti have understood that there could be no political rebirth without a moral rebirth. Physical force, as I have said, sometimes is necessary—Abraham Lincoln, I repeat, found it necessary—to impose a superior principle; but order, above all, ought to be defended in the consciences of the citizens. Modern states can rest upon nothing but a general sense of duty to the fatherland. For this reason, the moral health of a people is bound up indissolubly with the political fortunes of the country.

Fascismo's immediate task, after breaking the resistance of the caste of politicians that opposed the rebirth of Italy, was to organize the new state; fascismo's ultimate and much greater task is to deepen and solidify the country's civic morality. Hence our parole de jour: 'Duty.'

"What do you say of classic culture?"

"That, for us, it is the basis of every true civic education. I do not wish to appear to express a principle of universal validity, but I believe that, if the classic culture is for us indispensable to our self-consciousness, it is for every people one of the most powerful instruments of civilization."

"What is your favorite art?"

"Music. Because it is the most communicable. Next I like architecture, poetry, sculpture, painting."

Art Promise of America.

"What do you think of Maeterlinck's dictum that 'America has the cruelest commercialism the world ever has known?'"

"This Belgian is a great poet. I doubt if any of his contemporaries equal him as a psychic analyst. But only a lack of imagination can blind one to the stupendous art promise of the United States. It is still mainly promise, to be sure, for Americans have been busy over other things. But one day it will dazzle the world. One day the Americans will lead civilization in the fine arts, dimming even the greatest glories of the past. It all is sleeping in their destiny. Intense and mighty in material things they undoubtedly are. Why? Because of youth, simplicity, boundless energy. These qualities in due course will turn from industry, commerce, engineering, mechanics, to artistic and literary efflorescence. Material America we know; artistic America we are yet to see."

Sig. Mussolini is a great student of history. He examines all phases of human development from the standpoint of historical criticism. "Three cities made history," he says. If you ask "What three?" he replies: "No matter. Cities always make history; villages endure it." Rome, it goes without saying, is one of the three cities of Mussolini's meaning. Hear him on the

Eternal city: "Rome is to-day, as it ever has been, as it ever will be, the living heart of our race. It is the imperishable symbol of our vitality as a people. Who holds Rome, holds the nation."

State Above All Classes.

Thus he felt when, in the closing days of October, 1922, he marched at the head of 50,000 blue-shirted nationalists and black-shirted fascisti to take possession of the capital—a peaceful, disciplined, soldierly host, entering a city equally peaceful, and a city that smothered the marchers with flowers.

"What is fascismo's attitude to the classes?"

"None of us has ever thought of denying the historical function of the social classes. Class struggles are a reality of history. But, precisely because they are, they are not to be isolated from the other realities that form the tissue of history. Class struggles, for example, cannot be abstracted from the reality of the nation. Fascismo rejects the conception—as a matter of fact it has been outgrown in modern scientific thought—that history can be reduced to the struggle of the classes. This conception fascismo rejects in favor of the more organic idea that the classes act within the state according to their several interests, while the state, representing the historical unity of the life of a people, is necessarily above these interests and these struggles. States have, with regard to the classes, a superior aim to attain, a higher task to serve. They dare not permit the struggle of the classes to assume supremacy in the national life."

From the lips of Mussolini have burst many expressions, which, taken alone, would mislead the world concerning his temper and views. For example, he cried out to a great audience on one occasion: "It is blood that moves the wheels of history!" This crimson figure of speech would suggest that the present head of the Italian state believes in war for its own sake.

Peace Necessary to the World.

"Do you?" I asked him.

"Peace at any cost is as absurd as war at any cost. Neither Italy nor the United States, fortunately for both

and for all, followed the peace-at-any-cost doctrine in the late war. One's country imperiled means that one must fight. One cannot ignore one's country any more than the tree can ignore its sustaining soil. But I reject with equal energy the doctrine that war can be the major interest of the world.

"And, if you want to know something else, namely, my opinion with reference to the world's interests in peace at this moment, I reply, sincerely and in full consciousness, that peace is necessary to Europe to-day; and that I, for my part, have directed Italian foreign policy in this sense, solving two of its most essential problems—our relations with Yugoslavia and our relations with Russia. Italy is non-aggressive. Italy wants respect and friendship and is ready to reciprocate them. Italy is absolutely for clear treaty relations with other powers, and for the strictest honoring of such treaties at whatever cost."

Corfu is not a subject of which Mussolini is at all afraid. He is deeply persuaded that the bombardment averted a crisis of the greatest peril to the peace of the world. Responsibility for the massacre of the Italian members of the international commission for the delimitation of the Greco-Albanian frontier, he places squarely upon the shoulders of the Greek government.

"I struck for international morality," said he. "I struck for the tranquillity of the Balkan states. I struck against war. I struck for civilization."

Favors the League Idea.

Probably no one is more skeptical about "beautiful chimeras," or more scornful of the "ideologies," than is Mussolini. Yet he is no cynic. He confesses himself "a deeply religious man," esteems religion "a formidable force that must be respected and defended," and declares against "anti-clerical and atheistic democracy, which represents an old and useless toy." He supports the ideal of reduced burdens and perils for humanity through judicious and gradual disarmament, but strongly holds that pietistic idealism in this sphere must not be allowed to expose the treasures of centuries of human toil, valor, and suffering to

some sudden new eruption of savagery or tyranny.

"What do you think of the league of nations?"

"I think everything possible should be done to realize the ideal of the league—the ideal of universal peace based upon justice. At times in their long history Italians have been almost too wide in their thinking and in their sympathies. Still if they were, I reckon it among their first titles to greatness. Remarkable thinkers—Renan among them—have feared universalism as leading to national decay. But our world is different from what it was before the war. All humanity has a wider vision, a keener sense of fellowship, a quickened conscience toward those who must bear the brunt of war, if war come.

"Peace with honor, peace with justice, peace that does no violence to any nation's healthy and righteous self-respect—that, indeed, is something worth struggling for, despite any peril inhering in internationalism. Internationalism would not be safe for a single nation; it is safe for all nations moving in concert toward a rational scheme of political, economic, and cultural intercourse. Nations need, and generally realize that they need, a lasting foundation of pacific co-existence. Such a foundation cannot be had without skillful and patient building, and such building is out of the question without established machinery for conducting international affairs in accordance with deliberately-developed world opinion. Governments and peoples must work together. They can work together only by understanding one another. They can understand gathering in a common council chamber one another only, so to speak, by fore-or forum."

The Lessons of the Trenches.

In the full sense, Mussolini is a veteran of the world war. He fought for Italy's intervention. When Italy intervened, he went to the front as a private in the 11th Bersagliere regiment. In 1917, through the bursting of a shell, he received thirty-eight wounds. Promoted on the field, and invalidated out of the army, he returned to Milan and resumed his editorship of the *Popolo d'Italia*—for this in-

dividualist son of a socialist father who worked at the forge and of a mother who taught school is by profession a journalist—and in that capacity he continued to support Italian arms until the final victory.

"Let us never forget the trenches," said he. "Their bloody filth those of us who were in them cannot forget. But let us remember some other things. Let us keep our eyes upon the widened horizons men of many nations saw in the trenches. Incalculable sacrifices call for a new phase in the history of humanity. What millions suffered death and mutilation for—the supremacy of the freedom of the human soul over physical force—statesmen should not forget.

"Thinkers should prosecute to permanent success the work begun by fighting men. Fascismo is wholly for peace with honor and liberty. Fascismo is wholly for pledging the world, in the proper way, to this cause. I think America should swing into the orbit of this movement. Italy will not oppose the entry of Germany; Germany's great power should be devoted to peace. Italy will not oppose the entry of Russia. Mankind in solid phalanx for the victory of reason and justice over violence should be triumphant. International unity for peace, in other words, ought to be an irresistible weapon. But mankind cannot conquer peace with a broken sword."

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